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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 05/07/09-2

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(11) Poll: 47 PERCENT see need for constitutional revision

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 3, 2009

Ahead of Constitution Day, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun conducted a public opinion survey. In the poll, respondents were asked if they thought the Constitution should be amended. In response to this question, affirmative answers outnumbered negative ones at 47

PERCENT and 38 PERCENT . The proportion of those in favor of constitutional revision was down 1 point from a poll taken a year ago, and the proportion of those for constitutional protection also down 5 points. This is presumably because the Diet has stagnated its debate on the Constitution.

In the breakdown of reasons for supporting constitutional revision, 62 PERCENT said "the Constitution should incorporate ideas that meet the times," up 8 points from the last poll. This reason topped all other reasons. Among other reasons, 16 PERCENT picked "Japan should change its system so it can easily push for reforms," with 13 PERCENT choosing "the Constitution has provisions that are far apart from reality."

In the meantime, the most common reason given for protecting the Constitution from change was "Japan's pacifism could change in nature with constitutional revision" (36 PERCENT ), followed by "the Constitution should not be amended unless otherwise there is something really serious" (29 PERCENT ). The gap between the proportions of those supporting constitutional revision and those supporting constitutional protection expanded slightly.

The survey was taken by Nikkei Research Inc. by telephone on a random digit dialing (RDD) basis. For the survey, samples were chosen from among men and women aged 20 and over across the nation. A total of 1,388 households with one or more eligible voters were sampled, and answers were obtained from 866 persons (62.4 PERCENT ).

(12) Poll: 64 PERCENT opposed to amending Article 9

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ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
May 2, 2009

Ahead of Constitution Day on May 3, the Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey. In the poll, respondents were asked if they thought it would be better to change Article 9 of the Constitution. In response to this question, a total of 64 PERCENT answered "no," with only 26 PERCENT saying "yes." Meanwhile, 53 PERCENT responded "yes" to a question asking if the Constitution should be amended. Among them, 42 PERCENT said it would be better to change Article 9, with 49 PERCENT saying it would be better not to change it. The survey was conducted April 18-19.

In a previous poll conducted in April 2007 when the Abe cabinet was in office, respondents were also asked if they thought it would be better to change Article 9. In that poll, "no" accounted for 49 PERCENT , and "yes" for 33 PERCENT . In a poll taken in April last year when the Fukuda cabinet was in office, the gap between the proportions of negative and affirmative answers widened, with "no" accounting for 66 PERCENT and "yes" for 23 PERCENT . There was no marked change between this poll and last year's one.

Those who gave affirmative answers to the question about Article 9 (26 PERCENT of all respondents) were further asked to choose between two options for how it should be amended. Among them, opinion was split, with 50 PERCENT saying the Constitution should only prescribe the existence of the Self-Defense Forces and 44 PERCENT saying the SDF should be stipulated as a military entity like other countries'.

Asked whether the Constitution should be amended as a whole, affirmative answers accounted for 53 PERCENT , outnumbering negative ones at 33 PERCENT . In 2007, affirmative answers accounted for 58 PERCENT , with negative ones at 27 PERCENT . Last year, the affirmative figure was 56 PERCENT , with the negative figure at 31 PERCENT .

(13) China's participation urged

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)  
May 6, 2009

Nakahiro Iwata, Washington

Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito, now visiting the U.S., met with U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern in Washington on May 4. They agreed to further strengthen bilateral ties in order to urge China to agree on compulsory participation in the next-term framework to curb global warming (post-Kyoto protocol).

Saito pointed out that a framework that obligates emerging countries, such as China, to cut a certain level of carbon emissions is necessary. Stern agreed with the proposal, adding, "The U.S. will not take part in a framework that China does not participate in."

(14) U.S. joint chiefs of staff chairman: China's military buildup appears aimed at U.S.

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 6, 2009

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Hideya Yamamoto, Washington

The USS Victorious, an ocean surveillance ship, which is now carrying out operations in waters in the Yellow Sea, was obstructed by two Chinese fishing boats on May 1, an U.S. Defense Department official revealed on May 5. A similar incident occurred between the U.S. and Chinese ships in March in the South China Sea. Following the series of incidents in international waters, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen explicitly said that rapid buildup in the Chinese Navy and Air Force "is aimed at the United States." He expressed a sense of alarm heightened between the U.S. and China in the Pacific region, including the U.S. bases in Japan.

The two Chinese vessels obstructed the navigation of the USS Victorious, by coming close to the USS ship, which was in operation in international waters in the Yellow Sea. The USS Victorious urged a Chinese government organization ship nearby through a formal route to have the two fishing boats discontinue their act of disturbance. The two Chinese ships moved away from the USS Victorious.

The USS Victorious was involved in another incident with a Chinese ship in March in the Yellow Sea. When another U.S. ocean surveillance ship was interrupted by a Chinese vessel, the U.S. Navy hastily dispatched a destroyer.

According to Reuters, Navy Adm. Mullen made a more specific remark in a speech delivered at a conference of the Navy League of the United States: "China's buildup of sea and air military power appears aimed at the United States." He took the view that China's military buildup was focused on the U.S. Navy and U.S. bases overseas.

Mullen said that China had the right to strengthen its national security, but the buildup would require the United States to enhance cooperation with its allies in the Pacific region, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.

Jeffrey Bader, senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council (NSC), made this comment on the U.S.-China incidents in international waters: "The absence of a sound relationship between the U.S. and Chinese militaries is a part of that strategic mistrust." He then called for the need for the U.S. and Chinese governments to promote security dialogue of high-level officials.

(15) Japanese, German leaders confirm cooperation to overcome economic crisis

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 6, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso, who is now visiting Europe, held talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the afternoon of May 5 at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin. Aso and Merkel confirmed that their countries would strengthen cooperation to overcome the global

economic crisis. The two leaders agreed on a policy of pressing for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718 on North Korea's missile launch. They also confirmed that Tokyo and Berlin would consult and cooperate on dealing with such issues as global warming, the Afghanistan-Pakistan situation, and the new-type influenza.

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At a joint press conference, Aso stressed that both countries should become permanent UNSC members. He referred to suspicion that Iran was developing nuclear weapons, saying:

"Iran remains isolated from the international community. However, relations between Japan and Iran are not that bad, so we would like to play a role of exposing President Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad to world opinion."

Merkel said that North Korea needed to return to the six-party talks. She continued: "The North Korean regime has deprived its people of their freedom. From the standpoint of learning from German history, I hope that regime will ease its controls."

Prior to his meeting with Merkel, Aso delivered a policy speech titled, "Japan-Europe partnership to overcome global issues." He spoke at Humboldt University on the morning of May 5 before an audience of about 120, including business leaders and academics. This was the first time for a Japanese prime minister to deliver a foreign policy speech in Europe.

Aso emphasized that Japan and Europe, sharing such common values as democracy, have the capability and responsibility for dealing with global issues. He said that the influence of Japan and Europe has grown. He called for strengthening cooperation between Japan and Europe on four issues: financial and economic crisis; climate change; war on terror; and nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Aso explained North Korea's nuclear programs and its abductions of Japanese nationals, as well as the threat to Japan of China's military buildup and modernization. He asserted that the security environment surrounding Japan was becoming increasingly severe. He added: "Now is the historical chance to start moving toward the goal of creating a nuclear-weapons free world."

Aso will leave Berlin on the night of May 5 on a government plane and return home on the afternoon of May 6.

(16) International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament's draft report to state world can abolish nuclear weapons after 2025

MAINICHI (Top Play) (Full)  
May 6, 2009

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by former Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and former Australian Foreign Minister Evans, which the governments of Japan and Australia set up last year for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, plans to draw up a report this fall. A draft of the report was revealed on May 5. The draft states that it will be possible for the world to abolish nuclear weapons in a three-stage process by reducing the role of nuclear weapons through limiting the objective of nuclear arms to deterrence under U.S. leadership.

The draft report consists of three parts - (1) the world in peril; (2) policy options and limitations; and (3) a realistic action program.

The action program, which sets achievement targets for short-term,

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mid-term, and long-term stages, characterizes the abolishment of nuclear weapons as a realistic goal that can be achieved with each

country still maintaining its security.

The short-term goal (2009-2012) looks at the first term of U.S. President Obama. It envisions that the U.S. president would issue a statement that the U.S. will not use nuclear arms as long as other nuclear powers do not, and will limit the role of the nuclear arms it possesses to be used as deterrents for itself and its allies. It also envisages that the president would declare that the U.S., along with other nuclear powers, will consider a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons. With the launch of talks on the promotion of the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, it will be possible to curb Tehran's nuclear arms development and achieve denuclearization of North Korea at an early date.

The mid-term goal (until 2025) envisages that each country would cut its nuclear capabilities to the minimum security level and cancel its war preparation activities using nuclear arms. The long-term goal (2025 and after) envisions the establishment of an international denuclearization verification system to prevent covert nuclear development.

The Japanese government is against the idea of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, citing that it is difficult to verify and will weaken the nation's security. However, Chairman Kawaguchi declared: "(Even if Washington declares no-first-use of nuclear weapons), it must still ensure security for its allies. It is important for Washington to be a half-step ahead of Tokyo."

ZUMWALT